

# NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION NEWS RELEASE

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**NOTE: Reporters are invited to attend the conference.**

## EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION CONFERENCE APRIL 21-22

More than 200 teachers and administrators will attend the Nebraska Department of Education's Excellence in Education Conference April 21-22 in Lincoln.

The conference will focus on issues related to improving high school dropout and graduation rates in Nebraska schools. Research shows that preparation for high school graduation, college and careers begins with early childhood education. Research also shows that three indicators can predict student success. Those indicators are good school attendance, appropriate behavior and success in the classroom.

Nebraska Education Commissioner Roger Breed will speak at 8:30 a.m. on April 21. Nebraska Deputy Education Commissioner Scott Swisher will open the conference at 8:30 a.m. on April 22.

The conference will be held at the Holiday Inn Downtown, 141 N. 9<sup>th</sup> St., in Lincoln, from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. on April 21-22.

Highlights of the conference include keynote speakers:

- Wed., April 21, 9 a.m.: Luis Cruz, principal of Baldwin Park High School in California, will talk about how race and poverty affect education and effective teaching methods.
- Wed., April 21, 12:30 p.m.: Joanna Fox, policy analyst and program developer for the Center of Social Organization of Schools at Johns Hopkins University. Fox will talk about changes schools and districts could make to improve student achievement and also demonstrate "GRADNATION," an on-line tool to help educators and communities develop school improvement strategies.
- Thurs., April 22, 9 a.m.: Rudy Crew, president of Global Partnership Schools, will focus on transforming schools to better prepare students for college and careers.
- Thurs., April 22, 1 p.m.: Tom Osborne, University of Nebraska athletic director, will talk about the TeamMates mentoring program that he and his wife, Nancy, founded.

Highlights of the breakout sessions held during the event include:

- *The Good News and Bad News about Nebraska Dropout and Graduation Rates*, a presentation by Peter Smith of the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Smith will present his study of Nebraska schools and factors that led to students dropping out of school.
- *Looking at Lincoln Public Schools Data to Inform Graduation and Dropout Issues*, a presentation by Lincoln Public Schools.

The full agenda is available at [www.nde.state.ne.us/cspd/conference](http://www.nde.state.ne.us/cspd/conference). For additional information about the conference, contact Alice Senseney at [alice.senseney@nebraska.gov](mailto:alice.senseney@nebraska.gov).

The public may register at the door.